



# Karuna Yoga Newsletter

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## YOGA THERAPY

### IMPROVING MOVEMENT IN THE HIPS

In the two previous newsletters I wrote about how yoga could help resolve problems with your knees. A knee problem could be the result of tight muscles in the hips. So this month we'll practise yoga postures that help to release the muscles in the hips.

#### THE HIPS

The hip joint is where the thigh bone (femur) and the pelvis meet to create this joint. When the femur moves on the pelvis, it normally moves in six directions – forward, behind, toward and away from the midline of the body, external rotation and internal rotation. When the hips become tight, any of these directions may be impacted. When that occurs, the body will compensate as it tries to find another way to move. This can result in pain or strain in the Sacroiliac joints (where the two pelvic bones attach to the sacrum), knees, ankles, back or neck.

#### THERAPEUTIC YOGA

This combines traditional yoga postures, breathing techniques and meditation with modern scientific understanding of anatomy and physiology. It is a balanced and mindful approach to health and healing. If you experience pain, always move in a slow and mindful way to create a sense of ease. As your pain levels decrease and your movement improves, your strength and core stability will also improve. To get out of pain, you need to begin to move without pain, even if you are moving just a couple of centimetres. Adding more pain doesn't reduce pain. To reduce pain, you need to add more ease and softness to your yoga practice.

#### BREATHE

When you are practising yoga, focus on keeping your breath smooth, your jaw relaxed and your face soft. If you notice that you're holding your breath or holding extra tension anywhere in your body, this is a sign you're going too far. Come out of the posture, take some slow breaths and release the tension before moving again. Becoming aware of your breath allows you to develop ease and yoga can then become effortless.

#### INCREASING MOBILITY AND STABILITY

As you practise the yoga postures for your hips, learn how your hips move and how the spine, pelvis and femurs interact with one another. The more you can watch and explore, the more the hips tend to let go and this will increase their stability. Always relax first before moving, bring yourself into the present moment of yoga and move thoughtfully.

#### PELVIC FLOOR

The muscles at the base of the pelvis have direct connections to the functioning of the hips. To strengthen the pelvic floor you are pulling up and in with the urinary, vaginal (for women), testicular (for men) and anal sphincter muscles. When you are effectively using your sphincter muscles, you will find greater stability in your pelvis and more ease in your hips.

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## POSTURES TO IMPROVE MOVEMENT IN THE HIPS

<p><b>BALASANA (child's posture)</b>          This posture gently stretches the hips, thighs and ankles. It helps to calm the brain and relieves stress and fatigue. Try supporting the head with a blanket or a block to relieve back and neck pain.</p>	 <p>RORY EARNSHAW</p>
<p><b>SUPTA BADDHA KONASANA (reclining bound angle)</b>          This posture stretches the inner thighs, groins and knees. It helps to gently open the hip joints. If you experience any pain in the knees, place supports under your thighs. This is a good posture to practise pulling up the sphincter muscles to improve stability in your pelvis and to ease the hips.</p>	 <p>CHRIS ANDRE</p>
<p><b>SUPTA PADANGUSTHASANA (reclining leg, foot and toe stretch)</b>          Place a yoga belt around the sole of one foot. The stretch to the legs increases flexibility in the pelvic area. The stretch should not hurt. Feel the muscles stretching and breathe into the stretch without any force. This will help to strengthen the hip and treats osteoarthritis of the hip and the knees by stretching the hamstrings and calf muscles.</p>	 <p>RORY EARNSHAW</p>
<p><b>UTTHITA TRIKONASANA (triangle)</b>          This posture stretches and strengthens the thighs, knees and ankles. The hips, groins, hamstrings, calves, shoulders, chest and spine are also stretched.          Always move slowly into the posture. Feel the muscles slowly stretching. It's not about achieving the final posture. It's about the journey you take to get there.</p>	 <p>RORY EARNSHAW</p>
<p><b>GARUDASANA (eagle)</b>          This posture stretches the thighs, hips, shoulders and upper back and helps to strengthen the ankles and calf muscles. Use your breath to improve concentration and this will improve your balance.          You can practise this posture sitting on the edge of a chair. This will keep your shoulders and pelvis in correct alignment.</p>	 <p>MARTY SCODUTO</p>
<p><b>BHARADVAJASANA (Bharadvaj's twist)</b>          This posture stretches the spine, shoulders and hips. It also relieves lower backache, neck pain and sciatica and improves digestion. A regular practice will also strengthen the lower back muscles. You may need a support to keep your pelvis level. You can practise this posture sitting sideways on a chair with your hands on the back of the chair and keeping your pelvis level.</p>	 <p>MICHAEL VENERA</p>
<p><b>VIPARITA KARANI (legs up the wall)</b>          This posture improves the mobility of the hips while releasing the back of the legs from the heels to the hips. You can practise this posture to relieve back strain or tired feet. If your hamstrings are tight, you may not be able to get your buttocks against the wall. This is ok. Just ensure that your pelvis is level.</p>	 <p>MICHAEL VENERA</p>